

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY ATHENS PRIORITY
INFO USDOC

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EFIS, PBOR, GR, US

SUBJECT:SEIZURE OF GREEK FISHING VESSEL "ATLANTIKOS II"

REF: A) ATHENS 7120, B) ATHENS 6985, C) STATE 170846,
D) STATE 166435, E) ATHENS 6706

1. WE HAVE LEARNED THAT THE US ATTORNEY IN BOSTON AND THE
DEFENSE ATTORNEY FOR THE SHIPOWNERS HAVE NARROWED
CONSIDERABLY THE DOLLAR RANGE OF A POSSIBLE OUT-OF-COURT
SETTLEMENT OF THE "ATLANTICOS" CASE. ACCORDING TO THE
DEFENSE ATTORNEY, HE HAS BEEN AUTHORIZED BY THE SHIPOWNERS
TO OFFER PAYMENT OF \$125,000 AS A SETTLEMENT FOR THE FINE.
THE SHIPOWNERS' LAWYER ALSO TELLS US THAT THE US ATTORNEY
IS NOW READY TO ACCEPT \$150,000 AS SETTLEMENT, A REDUCTION
OF \$100,000 FROM THE ORIGINAL FINE REQUEST.

2. THE DEFENSE ATTORNEY IS NOW RECOMMENDING THAT THE
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SHIPOWNERS PAY THE \$150,000 SO THAT THIS MATTER CAN BE

SETTLED QUICKLY AND THE VESSEL RELEASED. THE SHIPOWNERS ARE EXPECTED TO INFORM THEIR LAWYER ON JULY 19 WHETHER THEY CAN ACCEPT THE US ATTORNEY'S OFFER.

3. EMBASSY MAY DRAW ON THE ABOVE IN PROVIDING THE FOREIGN MINISTRY WITH A STATUS REPORT. IN DOING SO, IT SHOULD ALSO INDICATE THAT, AS DIFFERENCES OVER THE AMOUNT OF THE FINE

HAVE NARROWED, WE BELIEVE RESOLUTION OF THIS CASE SHOULD BE POSSIBLE BETWEEN THE TWO ATTORNEYS INVOLVED WITHOUT THIRD-PARTY ASSISTANCE. THE EMBASSY MAY DISCREETLY INDICATE TO TZOUNIS THAT THE DEPARTMENT'S INQUIRIES AT THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT MAY HAVE BEEN HELPFUL IN REDUCING THE FINE BY 40 PERCENT BUT WE WOULD NOT WANT KNOWLEDGE OF OUR EFFORTS TO BE CONVEYED FURTHER.

4. SHOULD THE EMBASSY NEED ADDITIONAL JUSTIFICATION FOR THE AMOUNT OF THE FINE, IT MAY DRAW AGAIN ON PARAGRAPH 2 FROM REF D. THE EMBASSY MAY REITERATE THAT EVEN FIRST OFFENDERS WHO CATCH LOBSTERS INADVERTENTLY BUT NEGLECT TO RETURN THEM TO THE SEA IN A TIMELY AND SAFE MANNER HAVE BEEN FINED ABOVE \$100,000. HABIB

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